

Milestone Spring at Big South Fork Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Tennessee/Kentucky National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction

March and April 2005 were a milestone period for Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (NRRA). For the first time in decades, fire managers were able to successfully burn areas of the park that were identified as possessing high potential for benefits from fire.

Five separate prescribed fires (40 to 600 acres each) were conducted, totaling about 1,200 acres covering less than 1.5% of the land area of the park. The burn plots were located in Scott and Fentress Counties in Tennessee and in McCreary County in Kentucky.



*Mitchell Field Prescribed Fire.
Photo by Kevin Moses.*

- The Monroe Fields Project (KY), Newtie King Project (KY) and the Mitchell Fields Project (TN) are all cultural landscapes which are being maintained through the use of prescribed fire.
- The Divide Road Project (TN) helped to reduce fuels adjacent to Pickett State Forest.

Personnel and equipment were provided by Big South Fork NRRA and the Cumberland Gap Fire Use Module. Crews of 20 – 25 firefighters and 4 engines were on hand for each burn.

The park's fire management plan, approved in September 2004, outlines a multi-strategy approach utilizing eight major tools or strategies for perpetuating park resources and protecting local communities: fire suppression, prescribed fire, mechanical fuel reduction, education, monitoring, research, and preparedness activities. "By using these different tools at the right times and in the right locations, we can take advantage of fire's positive benefits and also reduce its harmful effects," says Frank Graham, Chief Park Ranger.

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